



Smart Shopping Tips for Black Friday and Beyond

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MADISON – With Thanksgiving less than a week away, many Wisconsin residents are gearing up for some long-standing traditions: family time, turkey dinners and Black Friday shopping. If you are planning to shop on Thanksgiving night or the following day, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) reminds you to read sales fliers and online advertisements closely to make certain that you understand any terms and conditions that come along with the deals that you are seeking.

“When you’re reading the ads to plan your shopping strategy, pay attention to the price, not the discount,” said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “Make sure you read the fine print in each store’s ad to understand specific sale policies such as limits on items and special return and exchange guidelines.”

With so many items heavily discounted on Black Friday, it is important for consumers to keep an eye on the register as they check out to ensure that they receive the deal they are after. The special pricing will apply only to specific items, so be sure that you have the correct product and model name or number and check your receipts to make certain that you are charged the advertised price at the register. If there is a discrepancy, Wisconsin law requires stores to charge the lowest advertised price and refund any overcharge.

“If you see a pricing issue on your receipt, bring it to the store’s attention immediately,” said Chalmers. “If the store will not correct the error, file a consumer complaint with DATCP and our weights and measures inspectors will follow up.”

DATCP’s weights and measures team is responsible for checking on stores to make sure Wisconsin consumers get what they are paying for. Last year, DATCP tested more than 35,000 items for price accuracy across the state. During these tests, consumers were charged the correct price or undercharged for an item 98.7% of the time.

Because Black Friday sales actually begin on Thanksgiving Day at many retailers and numerous sales continue through the end of the year, it is worth noting that smart shopping tips apply to the whole season. With that in mind, DATCP offers these tips for holiday shopping:

- Make sure you understand return/refund/exchange policies before you buy. Retailers may have stricter policies in place for Black Friday purchases. Keep your receipts.
- Read store ads thoroughly before shopping. Check for special conditions of the sale, including limited hours or quantities.
- Be prepared when you are at the register. Have store ads with you and take notes as you shop of any special prices or sale signage.
- Watch the display screen at the register as your items are being scanned. If there is an overcharge, speak up when you are in the store and ask for a refund.
- To file a pricing complaint with DATCP’s Weights and Measures Bureau, visit datcp.wi.gov, send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov or call 608-224-4942.

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